

**In the Claims:**

Please amend the claims by deleting the text shown as strikethrough and adding the text shown in underline.

Claims 1-36 (Cancelled)

37. (Currently Amended) The use of a saposin-related product and/or a modulator/effectorthereof ~~for the manufacture of a medicament~~ to promote the protection, survival and/or regeneration of insulin producing cells comprising administering to the cells of a patient in need thereof an effective amount of a saposin-related product and/or a modulator/effectorthereof.
38. (Original) The use of claim 37, wherein the insulin producing cells are beta-cells.
39. (Currently Amended) The use of claim 37~~or 38~~, wherein the insulin producing cells are of mammalian origin, preferably of human origin.
40. (Currently Amended) The use of ~~claim 37 any one of claims 37-39~~, wherein the insulin producing cells have been transfected with a pancreatic gene, particularly the Pax4 gene.
41. (Currently Amended) The use of ~~claim 37 any one of claims 33-40~~ for the prevention or treatment of a disease going along with impaired beta-cell function, particularly for the treatment of beta-cell degeneration in patients suffering from diabetes type I, LADA, or progressed diabetes type II, or for the prevention of beta-cell degeneration in patients at risk to develop beta-cell degeneration, like for example but not limited to patients suffering from diabetes type I or II, or LADA in early stages.
42. (Currently Amended) The use of ~~claim 37 any one of claims 33-41~~, wherein a saposin-related product or a modulator/effectorthereof that influences the expression level or function of a saposin-related product is administered to a patient

- (i) as a pharmaceutical composition e.g. enterally, parenterally or topically directly to the pancreas,
  - (ii) via implantation of saposin-related protein product expressing cells, and/or
  - (iii) via gene therapy.
43. (Original) The use of claim 42, wherein the saposin-related product or modulator/effector thereof is administered in combination with another pharmaceutical composition useful to treat beta-cell degeneration, for example but not limited to hormones, growth factors, or immune modulating agents.
44. (Currently Amended) The use of ~~claim 37-any one of claims 33-43~~, wherein the saposin-related product is a protein including purified natural, synthetic or recombinant saposin-related products and variants thereof.
45. (Original) The use of claim 44, wherein the saposin-related product is of mammalian origin, preferably human origin, more preferably selected from proteins or peptides substantially homologous to the human saposin-related precursor proteins as shown in Table 2.
46. (Currently Amended) The use of ~~claim 37-any one of claims 33-45~~, wherein the saposin-related product is a nucleic acid, e.g. RNA and/or DNA encoding a saposin-related protein product.
47. (Currently Amended) The use of ~~claim 37-any one of claims 33-46~~, wherein the differentiation of progenitor, e.g. stem cells into insulin-producing cells in vitro comprises
- a) optionally activating one or more pancreatic genes in progenitor cells,
  - b) optionally aggregating said cells to form embryoid bodies,
  - c) cultivating said cells or embryoid bodies in specific differentiation media containing saposin-related protein product and

- d) identifying and optionally selecting insulin-producing cells.
48. (Original) The use of claim 47, wherein the saposin-related treated insulin producing cells are  
(i) capable of a response to glucose and/or  
(ii) capable of expressing glucagon.
49. (Currently Amended) The use of ~~claim 47-any one of claims 47-48~~, wherein the saposin-related insulin producing cells are capable of normalizing blood glucose levels after transplantation into mice.
50. (Currently Amended) The use of ~~claim 37-any one of claims 33-49~~, wherein an effective amount of in vitro saposin-related cells are transplanted to a patient in need.
51. (Currently Amended) The use of ~~claim 37-any one of claims 33-50~~, comprising a stimulation of saposin-related expression,  
wherein cells from a patient in need that have been modified to produce and secrete a saposin-related protein product in vitro are re-implanted into the patient and/or  
wherein cells of a patient in need are modified to produce and secrete a saposin-related protein product in vivo.
52. (Original) A method for differentiating or regenerating cells into functional pancreatic cells, the method comprising: (a) cultivating cells capable of being differentiated or regenerated into pancreatic cells in the presence of an effective amount of a saposin-related protein in vitro (b) allowing the cells to develop, to differentiate and/or to regenerate at least one pancreatic function; and (c) optionally preparing an effective amount of the differentiated or regenerated pancreatic cells for transplantation into a patient in need thereof, particularly a human individual.

53. (Original) The method of claim 52, wherein the patient in need has (a) functionally impaired, (b) reduced numbers and/or (c) functionally impaired and reduced numbers of pancreatic cells.
54. (Currently Amended) The method of ~~claim 52-any one of claims 52-53~~, wherein said patient in need is a type I diabetic patient or type II diabetic patient or LADA patient.
55. (Currently Amended) The method of ~~claim 52-any one of claims 52-54~~, wherein the pancreatic cells are insulin-producing cells.
56. (Currently Amended) The method of ~~claim 52-any one of claims 52-55~~, wherein the pancreatic cells are beta-cells of the pancreatic islets.
57. (Currently Amended) The method of ~~claim 52-any one of claims 52-56~~, wherein the cells in step (a) are selected from embryonic stem cells, adult stem cells, or somatic stem cells.
58. (Currently Amended) The method of ~~claim 52-any one of claims 52-57~~, wherein the cells in step (a) are of mammalian origin, preferably human origin.
59. (Currently Amended) The method of ~~claim 52-any one of claims 52-58~~, wherein the protein is added at concentrations between 1 ng/ml and 500 ng/ml, preferably between 10 and 100 ng/ml, more preferably at about 50 ng/ml.
60. (Currently Amended) The method of ~~claim 52-any one of claims 52-59~~, wherein the at least one pancreatic function is selected from insulin production in response to glucose and expression of glucagon.
61. (Original) A method for differentiating or regenerating cells into functional pancreatic cells, the method comprising: preparing an effective amount of a saposin-related product

or of cells capable of expressing a saposin-related product for administration to a patient in need thereof.

62. (Original) The method of claim 61, wherein the saposin-related product is a protein or a nucleic acid.

63. (Original) The method of claim 61, wherein cells have been modified to produce and secrete a saposin-related protein product and are prepared for transplantation into a suitable location in the patient.

Claims 64-82 (Cancelled).